
Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp Program provides eligible people living in Arizona with Food Stamp benefits that can be used like cash to purchase food.

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The Food Stamp (FS) Program provides eligible households with Food Stamp benefits to help supplement their nutritional diets. Doctors tell us when it comes to our health; the most important thing is eating foods that contribute to a balanced diet. Fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grain cereals and milk are but a few of the foods that do this.

What are Food Stamp Benefits? Food Stamp benefits are used like cash to purchase eligible food products and various other products as approved by the Food Stamp Program. Instead of paper Food Stamp coupons, Food Stamp benefits are provided through the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) System. Participants are able to access their benefits from their assigned account by using a plastic debit card called QUEST. The debit card can be used at Automated Teller Machines (ATM) and Point of Sale (POS) devices located at most stores and most grocery stores accept them. Look for the Quest sign or ask your store if the card is accepted before making your purchase. [Return to Top](#)

How do I apply for Food Stamp benefits? Food Stamp benefits must be requested using an official application form. An application may be requested from any Family Assistance Administration local office, by phone, by mail, or can be downloaded and printed from the Family Assistance Administration web site by clicking this link: <http://www.azdes.gov/faa/appcenter.asp>. [Return to Top](#)

What are the Eligibility Requirements for the Food Stamp Program? In order to be eligible for Food Stamp benefits, you must meet certain citizenship, residency, resources, and income guidelines. If you are eligible for emergency Food Stamps, you will receive benefits within seven days.

Arizona Self Help provides individuals with a confidential online pre-screening tool that assesses eligibility for the Food Stamp program and other services and benefits.

Benefits CheckUp® provides senior citizens with a confidential online pre-screening tool that assesses eligibility for medical assistance, the Food Stamp program, and other benefits and services.

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What is the amount of Food Stamps I can receive? The amount of benefits an individual may receive is based upon the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Thrifty Food Plan. The Thrifty Food Plan is an estimate of what it costs to provide nutritious but inexpensive meals. This plan is an estimate of what it costs to provide nutritious, but inexpensive meals. The following example lists the amount of Food Stamp benefits that would be allotted to households with ZERO income.

Unit Size

FS Benefit

1

\$152

2

\$278

3

\$399

4

\$506

5

\$601

6

\$798

8

\$912

For each additional person in the Unit Size, add \$112

Thrifty Food Plan Effective October 1, 2005

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What can I buy with Food Stamps? Food Stamp benefits may be used to buy the following:

- Food products for human consumption
- Vegetable seeds, food-producing plants, roots, trees
- Items considered health foods such as wheat germ, brewers yeast, sunflower seeds packaged for human consumption, rose hips powder, and enriched or fortified foods
- Baby formula
- Diabetic or dietetic foods
- Distilled water or ice labeled for human consumption

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- Items used in the preparation or preservation of food such as spices and herbs, pectin, lard, or shortening
 - Meals prepared for and delivered or served to elderly or handicapped Food Stamp participants, when the organization is authorized to accept Food Stamps
 - Snack food such as candy, potato or tortilla chips, chewing gum and soft drinks
 - Participants and their spouses can buy meals with Food Stamp benefits from community dining places and restaurants that have been approved by FNS. The participant must meet one of the following:
 - 60 years of age or over
 - Receiving SSI
 - Homeless participants may use Food Stamps to purchase food in authorized food kitchens.

The Farmers' Market Project+ allows Food Stamp participants to purchase food item at certain farmer's markets.

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What CANNOT be bought with Food Stamps? Items that CANNOT be bought with Food Stamp benefits include the following:

- Alcoholic beverages and tobacco
- Non-food items such as soap and toiletries, paper products, cleaning products and cooking utensils
- Items used for gardening such as fertilizer, peat moss and similar products
- Items not intended for human consumption such as laundry starch, dog and cat food, seeds packaged as bird seed, and decorative dye that is used to color hard-cooked eggs
- Vitamins and minerals, in any form
- All health aids such as aspirin, cough drops or syrups and other cold remedies, antacids and all prescription medicines
- Hot foods and hot food products sold in grocery stores, hot at the time of sale and ready for immediate eating
- All foods marketed to be heated and served on the premises, and any prepared food sold to be eaten on the premises

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[Click here for a list of Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) or call 1-800-221-5689 for further information about the Food Stamp program.

To locate an FAA office closest to your residence, click on [Office Locations](#).

For specific program eligibility requirements, click on [AIMBIG policy manual](#).

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